THE CRISIS IN HEALTH CARE | **THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS**

SEPTEMBER 1992

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Consumer Reports

BRAND-NAME RATINGS

ROAD TEST:

- Chevrolet Corvette
- Mazda RX-7
- Nissan 300ZX Turbo
- Subaru SVX

DENTAL SECTION

- Toothpastes
- Mouthwashes
- Electric toothbrushes
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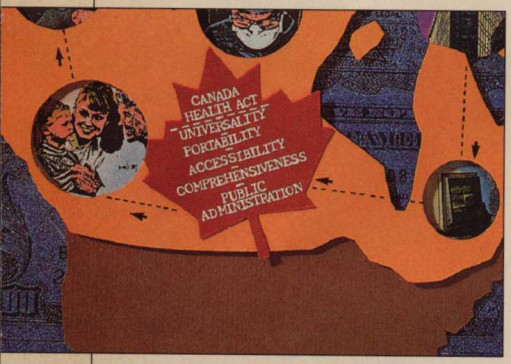

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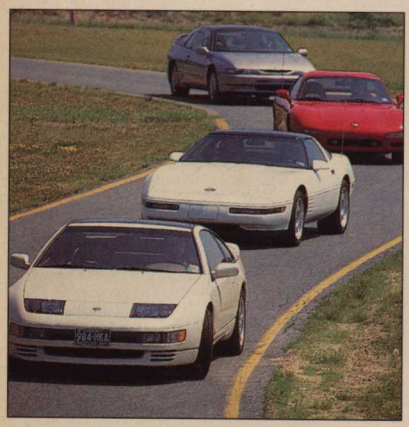

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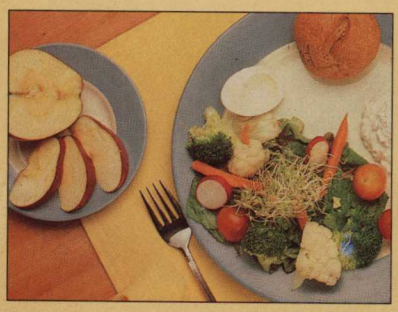

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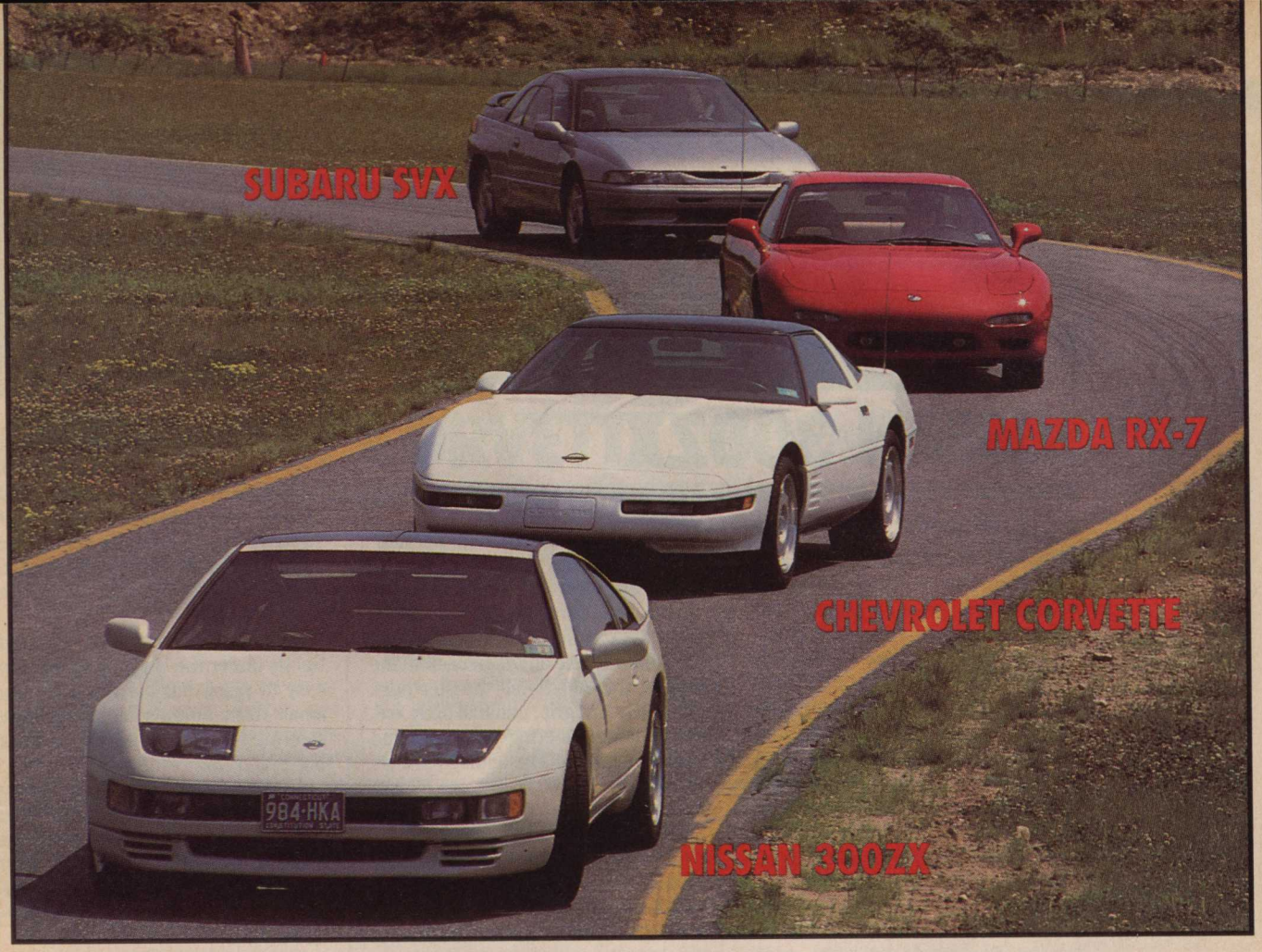


ROAD TEST

Type:
Sports cars

Prices:
$28,000 to $38,000

Models tested:
Nissan 300ZX Turbo, Chevrolet Corvette, Mazda RX-7, Subaru SVX

Best alternatives:
Dodge Stealth, Mitsubishi 3000GT

Ask a dozen car buffs to define a sports car and you'll probably get a dozen different answers based on performance, styling, seating, even advertising. But we doubt that we'll get any disagreement when we call the *Nissan 300ZX Turbo*, *Chevrolet Corvette*, and *Mazda RX-7* sports cars.

Classifying the *Subaru SVX* is tougher. It's included here because Subaru advertises it as a sports car, but we think of it as a sporty coupe. With its automatic transmission, quiet interior, and relatively cushioned ride, the driving experience may be a bit too tame for the car to earn a "sports car" designation. We generally concentrate on more practical (and more reasonably priced) transport—sedans, minivans, station wagons. But we have good reason for touching base with less practical cars from time to time. It's those models that generally give us our first glimpse of technological innovations, and they often provide new performance benchmarks against which to measure standard passenger cars.

This month's models, for instance, allowed us a critical look at a sophisticated computer-controlled traction system in the *Corvette* and sequential turbochargers in the *Mazda RX-7*—features that may eventually filter down to more reasonably priced cars. This group also set new benchmarks in acceleration, braking, and handling—important factors even in a family sedan.

The *Corvette* charged from 0 to 60 mph in 5.5 seconds, handily breaking the 6.3-second record the *Dodge Stealth* R/T Turbo set this year. (A peppy family sedan might take 9 or 10 seconds.)

The *RX-7* gave us a new braking record—60 mph to 0 in 119 feet. That was three feet shorter than the second-place *Dodge Stealth's* best, and a car length less than the 134 feet that the *Toyota Camry* V6, a good sedan, required.

The *RX-7* also sped through our avoidance-maneuver course at 60.5 mph, beating by 1 mph our previous record holder, a 1991 *Toyota MR2*. The *Ford Taurus* and *Toyota Camry*, two very competent sedans, could do no better than about 52 mph in that test.

The *Nissan 300ZX* was redesigned two years ago. We tested the top-line *Turbo* version, which has a removable T-bar roof. With leather upholstery and special paint, it listed for $38,335. A 2+2 version with tiny rear seats and a convertible model are also available.

Chevrolet introduced the plastic-bodied *Corvette* 39 years ago, and the model has changed extensively over the decades. This past July, the one-millionth *Corvette* rolled off the line. Our *LT1* version, with six-speed manual transmission and other options, listed for $38,668. An even more powerful *ZR1* version lists for about $65,000.

The *Mazda RX-7* has a restyled body but retains its unique rotary engine. As equipped, our car listed for $34,720. (A $1000 R-1 package, with stiffer suspension, upgraded tires, oil coolers, and cloth upholstery, would make the *RX-7* more a racer than a road car.)

The *Subaru SVX* comes from a company better known for economy cars. The *SVX* seats four and comes only with an automatic transmission. As equipped, ours listed for $30,204.

The *SVX* has full-time all-wheel drive; the *300ZX*, *Corvette*, and *RX-7* have rear-wheel drive. All these cars come with a driver's-side air bag and antilock brakes. All require Premium fuel.

Photos by Lawrence Frank

NISSAN 300ZX

Though it's everything a sports car should be, it's also remarkably smooth and easy to drive.

Performance

The 3.0-liter V6, with its twin turbochargers, runs flawlessly and delivers blazing acceleration without any noticeable turbo lag. From a standing start, the car accelerated to 60 mph in just 6.1 seconds—and it covered a quarter-mile in just 14.6 seconds, reaching 98 mph. Fuel economy was best in the group, at 21 mpg overall.

The five-speed manual transmission shifts crisply and precisely. Well-chosen gear ratios provide plenty of pickup in every gear.

The *300ZX* handles almost perfectly in routine driving; its four-wheel steering makes cornering especially precise. While not the fastest car through our avoidance maneuver (which simulates a swerve into the left lane and then back to the right), the *300ZX* felt the steadiest. Excellent tire grip, minimal body roll, and smooth steering give crisp and quick response. The antilock brakes provide short, straight stops.

Comfort and convenience

The electronically controlled suspension offers two settings. Even in the Touring mode, the softer of the two, the ride won't let you forget you're in a sports car. In the Sport mode, the ride worsens, becoming harder and more jittery. Except for a low-frequency throb on uneven pavement, the *300ZX* is commendably quiet inside for a sports car.

The placement of the pedals could be better. When the seat is set back far enough to allow adequate leg room to the accelerator, the driver has to stretch to fully depress the clutch pedal.

The bucket seats provide good, firm support wherever it's needed, but the optional, nonperforated leather feels clammy in winter and sweaty in summer. As with most sports cars, climbing in and out requires nimbleness. Some drivers may find the steering wheel too high or too close—and you can't adjust it.

The fully automatic climate-control system unobtrusively maintains the chosen temperature. Ample air streams from numerous ducts. The defogging and defrosting worked well front, side, and rear, as did the heated mirrors.

The operating controls, grouped tightly under the steering wheel, are easy to reach but hard to see. Two small horn buttons blend into the steering-wheel spokes. (We prefer a big center horn pad.)

The *300ZX's* cargo bay is roomy for a sports car; it can hold three Pullman cases and two weekend bags, or a folded wheelchair, with room to spare. When it's open, the rear hatch is unlikely to bump anyone's head.

Nissan provides a basic warranty of three years or 36,000 miles, with five years or 60,000 miles of coverage on the powertrain. Rust-through protection lasts for five years, regardless of mileage.

Safety and reliability

Besides a driver's-side air bag, the *300ZX* has three-point safety belts anchored to the door. The inboard ends are so short that buckling up is awkward. You need to buy a lap belt to secure a child safety seat.

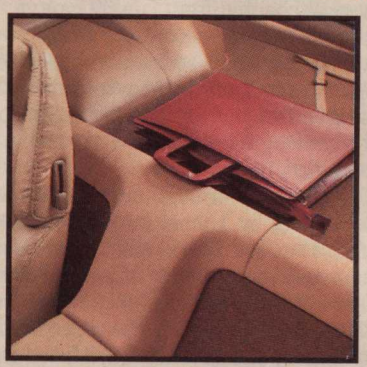
The sharply slanted hatchback reduces the rear view to a slit-like opening, and the roof pillars obstruct the view to the rear quarters.

The Government crash-tested a 1991 *Nissan 300ZX* into a fixed barrier at 35 mph. The driver dummy sustained "injuries" that were possibly severe; data for the passenger dummy were lost. In our 3- and 5-mph bumper-basher test, a fog-light lens suffered damage. The replacement light cost $125.

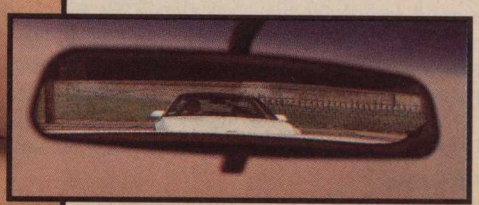
Repair data for the *300ZX* are quite thin, but we predict an average repair record.

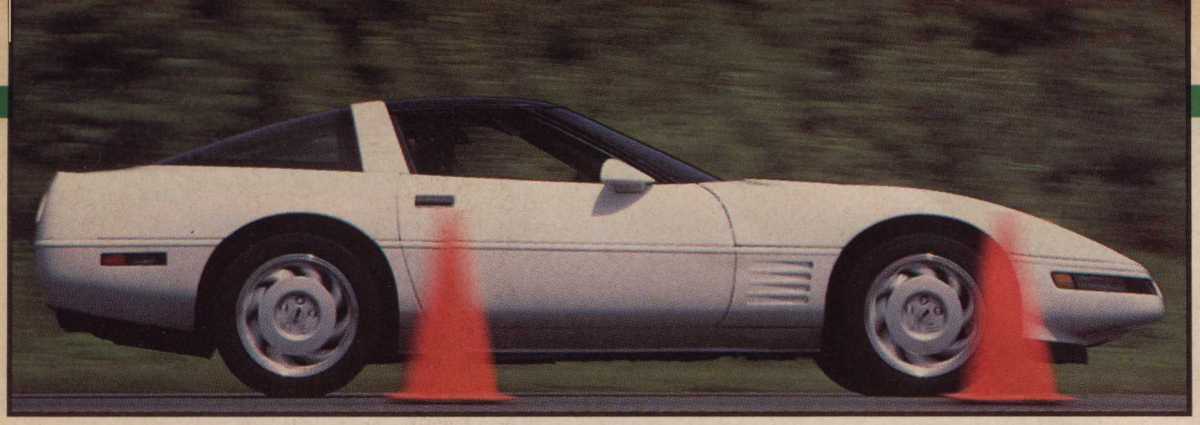
We noted seven sample defects in our car. A bit of metal was embedded in the paint. The tires were out of balance, and the inflator for the spare tire (which is is stored deflated) was missing.

Think small
The rear wheel wells crowd the small package shelf. The 300ZX is also available in a longer-wheelbase, 2+2 version, but its rear-seat area is unfit for adult habitation.



Squint both ways
Thick roof pillars (left) obstruct the view to the sides and rear corners, making traffic merges difficult. The steeply sloped rear hatch delivers the second half of the one-two punch, turning the rear view (below) into little more than a slit.





CHEVROLET CORVETTE

America's only native sports car delivers blazing power, secure braking, and crisp handling.

Performance

The 5.7-liter V8 starts quickly and runs reliably. The *Corvette* accelerated far faster than any other car we've tested, charging from 0 to 60 mph in 5.5 seconds. It covered a quarter-mile in 14.1 seconds, reaching a speed of 103 mph. Figure on about 17 mpg in mixed driving—on Premium fuel.

The shifting action of the six-speed manual transmission feels heavy but precise. To save fuel, a computer automatically guides the shifter from first gear directly into fourth when you shift at fairly low speed and low engine revs. It's hard to see from the position of the shift lever just what gear you're in. But with such tremendous torque on hand, it almost doesn't matter; you could do 55 mph in any of the five top gears. At 60 mph in sixth gear, the engine loafs along at about 1380 rpm. That's barely above idle speed.

Routine handling is smooth but not nimble; the *Corvette's* size and weight make it a bit awkward to steer. On bumpy roads, the tires don't stay firmly planted on the pavement. It's not a car you can thread easily in and out of traffic or along a winding country lane.

The *Corvette* negotiated our avoidance maneuver fairly crisply and very quickly, with only slight tail wag when the tires began to let go. Though heavy, the steering was quick and body roll negligible. The antilock brakes work superbly.

Comfort and convenience

The Sport and Performance settings on the electronically controlled suspension stiffen the ride, giving control at the expense of comfort. On the softer Tour setting, winding roads that are less than glassy smooth make the car bound; on rough roads, tall drivers tend to bang their head on the glass top.

At highway speeds, road and wind noises intrude objectionably. The powertrain booms loudly at 55 mph in sixth gear.

The leather-covered seats provide firm, well-padded support. With the seats set all the way back, though, the seatbacks can't recline enough to suit tall drivers. Short drivers had a problem in this car: With the seat adjusted so they could fully depress the clutch pedal, they were too close to the accelerator; with the accelerator at a comfortable distance, the clutch pedal was too long a stretch. Access is the worst in the group.

The optional automatic climate-control system nicely maintains the chosen temperature. It's unobtrusive—except after the car has sat in the hot sun. Then, a loud torrent of air blows in until the temperature stabilizes. The side-window defoggers, rear-window defroster, and heated outside mirrors work very well.

The major controls are logical. Push buttons call up digital readouts for various computer functions. The shifter partly obstructs access to the radio.

The rear hatch, two feet forward of the bumper, makes loading luggage awkward. If you load from the side, beware the unframed glass of the rear hatch.

The luggage area can hold two Pullman cases and a couple of weekend bags, or a folded wheelchair, with room left over. Deploying the security blind halves the luggage room. A deep, locking bin behind the passenger seat can hold valuables. Extricating the limited-service spare from its hiding place under the car is a humbling experience.

Chevrolet provides a basic warranty of three years or 36,000 miles, with six years or 100,000 miles of rust-through protection.

Safety and reliability

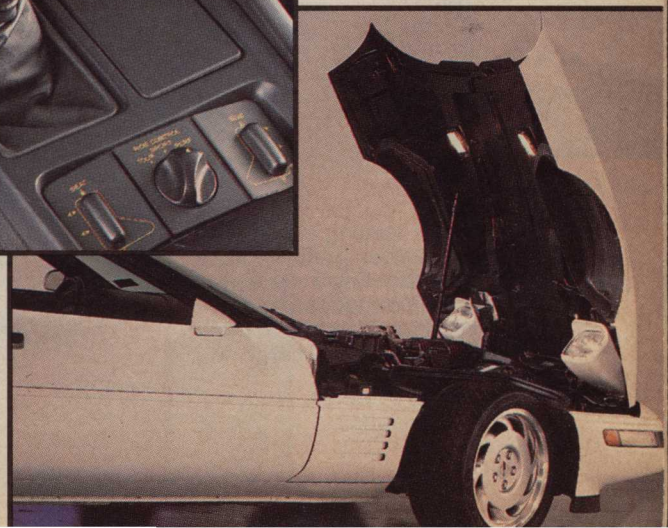
Besides a driver's-side air bag, the *Corvette* has three-point safety belts. We found them comfortable but tricky to buckle. A cinch button lets the lap belt be drawn snug, a safety plus. Even with the six-way power seat raised, drivers can't see well over the long hood or to the right front and right rear corners. Short drivers, especially, have to guess where the front of the car ends.

Our bumper basher tore the rear bumper's plastic covering. The repair estimate was $493.

The *Corvette's* reliability has never been good. Although recent data are thin, previous models have been much worse than average.

Our *Corvette* came with eight sample defects. The power steering leaked, an antilock brake sensor failed, and a side window leaked rain. The tires were out of balance, and the headlights were misaimed.

Shifty-shifty **Sixth gear is straight back from fifth. Lifting an awkward collar on the shift lever lets you engage reverse.**



Open wide and say "a-a-ah" **Entire forward section of the body hinges up for easy access to the engine and front suspension.**

MAZDA RX-7

Cast as a return to the pure sports car, the RX-7 looks and feels the part. Comfort is not part of the script—especially for tall drivers.

Performance

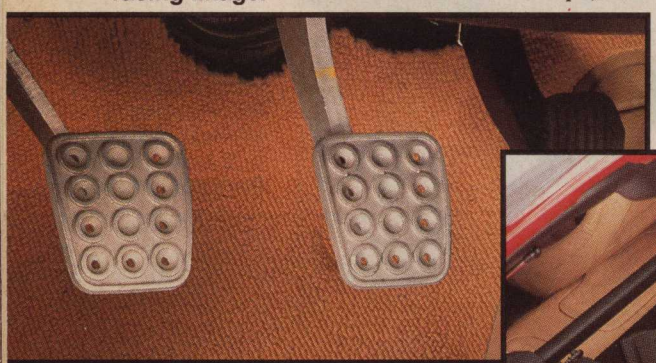
The *Mazda's* Wankel rotary engine starts and runs flawlessly. Although it displaces just 1.3 liters, it cranks out an impressive 255 hp. With its sequential turbochargers (one for low speeds, a larger one for high speeds), it provides fierce acceleration: 0 to 60 mph in six seconds. Expect about 18 mpg overall.

The five-speed manual transmission is well matched to the engine. The shift pattern is short, and the action of the shift lever feels precise.

The *RX-7* handles twisty, narrow roads with aplomb. It's nimble and precise, as a sports car should be. But on high-crowned or bumpy roads, the car tends to dart about. The *RX-7* sped through our avoidance-maneuver course at 60.5 mph, beating the 1992 *Dodge Stealth's* record by 1 mph.

The powerful antilock brakes also set a record, stopping the *RX-7* from 60 mph in only 119 feet on our dry test track.

Press the pedal to the metal
Bare aluminum pedals, drilled to save weight, are intended to give the RX-7 a racing image.



Comfort and convenience

Don't expect a comfortable ride in the *RX-7*. Whether the road is smooth or bumpy, every pebble and seam announces itself. Very loud road noise on coarse roads and tire noise on smooth roads intrude into the cabin.

A large person doesn't so much climb into the *RX-7* as put it on. Even average-sized people will find the cockpit cramped. With the accelerator a comfortable distance away, you have to stretch to floor the clutch pedal. For those who fit them, the narrow bucket seats provide good, firm support, especially against the side forces generated during hard cornering. The optional, nonperforated leather upholstery doesn't shed perspiration. Narrow footwells and very low seats and roof make access especially awkward.

The versatile climate-control system quickly provides ample warm or cool air. The defogging and defrosting worked well front, side, and rear.

The placement of the controls could be better. The two horn buttons on the spokes of the steering wheel are easy to bump inadvertently. The wiper lever is cluttered (it works the rear as well as the front wipers), and it's hidden by the steering wheel when the front wipers are on. The switch for the rear-window defroster, on the console, is easy to overlook. Instrumentation is complete, but reflections occasionally obscure the chrome-rimmed gauges.

A resonator duct for the optional Bose sound system takes up almost half the trunk space. We could fit only one Pullman case or a couple of weekend bags under the hatch. A folded wheelchair won't go in. Two covered bins in the shelf behind the seats and a tiny glove compartment can hold small objects.

Just hope you don't get a flat. To reach the limited-service spare, you must partially disassemble and move the serpentine Bose resonator, a major nuisance.

Mazda provides a three-year or 50,000 mile basic warranty. Rust-through protection is for five years, with unlimited mileage.

Mechanic's special
Getting at the spare involves partially disassembling a serpentine radio-loudspeaker duct that takes up much of the RX-7's small cargo bay.

Safety and reliability

The tension of the shoulder belts is uncomfortably high. The seat cushion may be too narrow for some child seats. The driver can see out much better from the *RX-7* than from the *300ZX* or the *Corvette*.

Aside from a couple of small creases in the bumpers, our basher inflicted no damage.

Older *RX-7s* had excellent repair records, but newer ones have not fared as well. We predict only average reliability for this model.

Our *RX-7* suffered from seven sample defects. The radiator was filled with undiluted antifreeze, and the parking-brake light came on over bumps. The front end was misaligned, and the wheels were out of balance. The headlights were misaimed. And the paint showed a few flaws, all of which we counted as a single defect.

SUBARU SVX

As a sporty coupe, the *SVX* is an able performer. As a sports car, it isn't in the same league with the other three models in this group.

Performance

The *SVX's* horizontally opposed (flat) 3.3-liter Six starts easily and runs smoothly. The car reaches 60 mph in 8.8 seconds—ample acceleration for normal driving, but well off the pace of the other cars. Expect to average about 19 mpg.

The *SVX's* four-speed automatic transmission shifts smoothly.

Normal handling feels very stable. While all-wheel drive provides excellent traction, the *SVX* lacks the precise handling of the *300ZX* and *RX-7*. When negotiating our avoidance-maneuver course, the body rolled noticeably. Steering effort is a bit light. The antilock brakes do an excellent job.

Comfort and convenience

The *SVX* provides the most comfortable ride in the group—smooth on good roads, just a bit stiff and busy on bumpy ones. Inside, it's as quiet as a good family sedan.

Thanks to the tilting and telescoping steering column and optional eight-way power driver's seat, all but the tallest people should find a comfortable driving position.

We liked the bucket seats but would have welcomed a shade more side support. The optional leather upholstery is nonperforated.

The SVX alone in this group has a rear seat, but it's none too roomy. Even average-sized adults won't want to spend much time back there.

Climbing in and out is relatively easy most of the time, but the motorized shoulder belt can ambush someone carrying packages.

A sophisticated automatic climate-control system quickly furnishes plenty of warmed or cooled air. Fresh air from the dash vents cannot be warmed, though, and no ducts lead to the rear seats. The defogging and defrosting work well, as do the heated outside mirrors.

The instruments are easy to see and read and, aside from the two tiny horn buttons on the spokes of the steering wheel, the controls are generally well designed.

We consider the automatic-up feature on the driver's power window hazardous. Just a quick jab at the button rapidly closes the window. A carelessly placed finger risks a serious pinch, and a carelessly placed child's or pet's head risks even nastier results.

The *SVX* has by far the roomiest trunk in the group, and folding down the rear seatback expands it even further. We were able to load four Pullman cases and a weekend bag, or a folded wheelchair, with ease. You can stash small valuables in the well around the limited-service spare.

Subaru provides a three-year or 36,000-mile basic warranty, with five years or 60,000 miles of coverage on the powertrain. Rust-through protection lasts for five years, without a mileage limit. Subaru also provides a comprehensive roadside-assistance program.

Safety and reliability

Besides a driver's-side air bag, the *SVX* has motorized front shoulder belts. Once those belts slide into place, it's all too easy to forget to buckle the manual lap belts. The three-point belts in the rear are difficult to buckle around an adult. You'll need to buy a locking clip to secure a child safety seat.

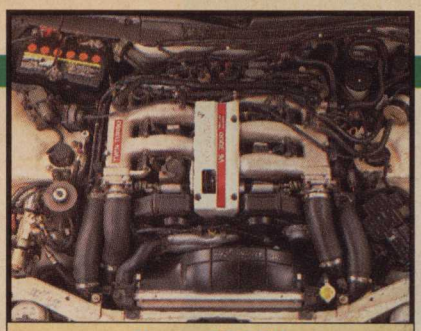
The *SVX* survived our bumper basher unscathed.

We have insufficient repair data on the *SVX* to predict its reliability, but other *Subaru* models have generally fared well.

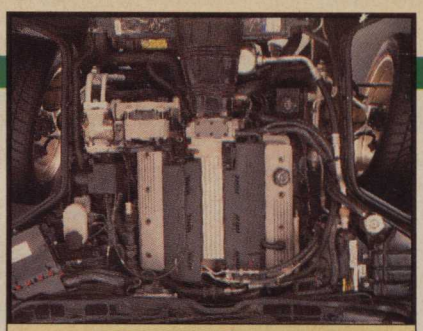
Our car came down with seven sample defects, including a few flaws in the finish (which we counted as one defect). The engine was overfilled with oil. The tires were overinflated (except for the spare, which was underinflated). The wheels were out of balance, and the front end was misaligned.

Window of inopportunity
The immovable portion of the futuristic side window makes paying tolls awkward. The Auto-up feature can crush an aluminum can—or a carelessly placed finger.

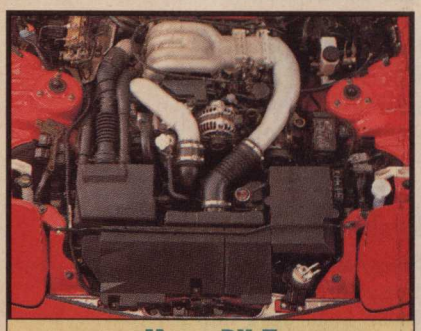
Hide and seek
A fold-up panel on the dashboard can conceal the radio and tape player—one of the "discreet touches" Subaru refers to in its brochure.



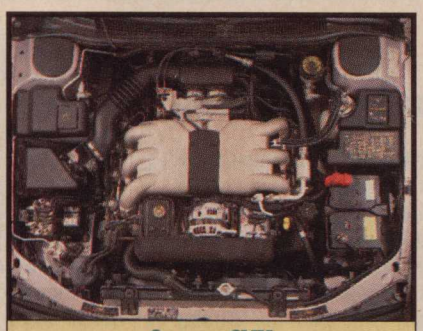
NISSAN 300ZX



CHEVROLET CORVETTE



MAZDA RX-7



SUBARU SVX

Different strokes. Each of these cars has a different engine type. Shown here are the Nissan's 3.0-liter V6, the Corvette's massive, 5.7-liter V8, the Mazda's 1.3-liter Wankel rotary engine, and the Subaru's horizontally opposed 3.3-liter Flat 6. Turbochargers, fuel injectors, and the life-support system of hoses and manifolds make life hard for owners daring enough to service these cars themselves.

Information, please. The steering wheel frames the major gauges nicely in all four cars. The 300ZX clusters the climate-control, wiper, and headlight switches on two instrument pods that project from the dashboard. The Corvette cocoons its driver with a high armrest that sweeps upward into a large cowl surrounding the instruments. Some drivers may find the RX-7's chrome-rimmed gauges distracting. When you use the SVX's wiper lever, it's obscured by the steering wheel.

NISSAN 300ZX

CHEVROLET CORVETTE

MAZDA RX-7

SUBARU SVX

RECOMMENDATIONS

They're impractical, they're expensive, and they gulp fuel. But they're a thrill to drive. If you must have a lusty, low-slung two-seater with whiplash acceleration, the *Nissan 300ZX*, the *Chevrolet Corvette*, or the *Mazda RX-7* should satisfy the craving.

We rated the *Nissan 300ZX Turbo* first in this group not because it's the fastest (the *Corvette* is faster) or stops shortest (the *RX-7* does that) or has the quietest interior (the *SVX* has that honor), but because it offers the best balance of performance, handling, and comfort. Add to that the expectation of at least average reliability.

The *Chevrolet Corvette* is a hybrid of 1960s muscle car and state-of-the-art technology. The huge V8 provides brutal acceleration. The bulky body, though prone to old-fashioned flexing on rough roads, nevertheless conceals up-to-the-minute computer-controlled manual gear selection, traction and ride control, and the latest in antilock braking technology. Unfortunately, poor reliability is a *Corvette* hallmark.

If you're looking for a pure, all-out performance package that makes few concessions to comfort, the 1993 *Mazda RX-7* is the model of choice. It's styled to resemble the sports cars of the '50s and '60s—part *Jaguar*, part *Cobra*, part *Ferrari*. Add to that a super-stiff ride and a stark interior and you have a car that captures the mythic sports-car image, warts and all. Whether the *RX-7's* you-are-there road feel is a vice or a virtue depends on your tolerance for corporal punishment. Our tall drivers said there just wasn't room enough for them. Reliability should be average, if the new *RX-7* is like previous models.

Another sports car to consider in this price class is the *Dodge Stealth/Mitsubishi 3000GT*, which we reported on in April 1992. In our tests, the *Stealth* R/T Turbo scored right up there with the *300ZX* and *Corvette*. It accelerated to 60 mph in 6.3 seconds, and it covered the quarter-mile in 14.9 seconds, reaching 96 mph—practically as fast as the *300ZX's* and *RX-7's* times. It also excelled in handling and braking. The *Stealth* and *3000GT* offer all-wheel drive for stability in all kinds of weather, plus a rudimentary rear seat for small children. Their reliability should be average.

But you can get a competent and quick little two-seater for a lot less than the $30,000-plus these cars cost. Consider the *Mazda MX-5 Miata* or the *Toyota MR2*, two sprightly sports cars that sell in the $15,000-to-$20,000 range. The *Miata* has been exceptionally reliable. The *MR2's* record dropped to average last year.

The *Subaru SVX* is a competent sporty coupe, though it lacks the sports cars' razor edge of performance. It offers the stability of all-wheel drive and the comfort and quietness of a competent sedan, along with a high level of technical sophistication. We expect it to be reliable. A couple of competent and far less expensive alternatives to the *SVX* are the *Honda Prelude* and *Toyota Celica*. Both should be reliable. ■

RATINGS

	Nissan	Chevrolet	Mazda	Subaru
Starting/running	●	●	●	●
Acceleration	●	●	●	◕
Transmission	●	●	●	●
Economy	◑	◕	◕	◑
Routine handling	●	●	●	◑
Emergency handling	●	●	●	◑
Dry braking	●	●	●	●
Ride, normal load	◑	◑	◕	○
Noise	○	◑	◑	◑
Driving position	○	○	○	◑
Front seating	●	●	◑	◑
Rear seating	—	—	—	◕
Front access	◑	◕	◑	○
Climate system	●	●	●	◑
Controls	○	◑	○	◑
Displays	●	●	◑	●
Trunk	○	◕	◕	○
Bumpers	◑	○	●	●
Predicted reliability	○	◕	○	New

Excellent ● Very Good ◒ Good ○ Fair ◑ Poor ◕

NISSAN 300ZX

Tested car. Two-door Turbo hatchback, $36,610 list. Standard equipment includes 3.0-liter DOHC 24-valve twin-turbo V6, five-speed manual transmission, driver's air bag, automatic air-conditioning, antilock brakes, four-wheel steering, electronically adjustable suspension, limited slip differential, power windows, power locks, dual heated power mirrors, power driver's seat, power antenna, T-bar roof, cruise control, rear-window defroster/wiper/washer, fog lights, alloy wheels, and stereo cassette sound system. Major options in our car: leather upholstery, and pearlescent paint. List price, as equipped, $38,335, including destination charge. **Other styles.** Two-door hatchback, $29,705; 2+2, $33,090; 1993 convertible, $35,995.

CHEVROLET CORVETTE

Tested car. Two-door hatchback, $33,635 list. Standard equipment includes 5.7-liter OHV LT1 V8, overdrive automatic transmission, driver's air bag, air-conditioning, antilock brakes, Acceleration Slip Regulation, limited slip differential, power windows, power locks, dual heated power mirrors, power antenna, removable roof panel, cruise control, tilt steering column, rear-window defroster, fog lights, security system, alloy wheels, and stereo cassette radio. Major options in our car: six-speed manual transmission, Preferred Equipment Group #1 (includes electronic air-conditioning, power driver's seat, upgraded stereo cassette sound system), electronically adjustable suspension, power passenger's seat, leather upholstery, and transparent roof panel. List price, as equipped, $38,668, including destination charge. **Other styles.** Two-door convertible, $40,145; Two-door coupe ZR1, $65,013.

MAZDA RX-7

Tested car. Two-door hatchback, $31,300 list. Standard equipment includes 1.3-liter twin-turbo rotary, five-speed manual transmission, driver's air bag, air-conditioning, antilock brakes, limited slip differential, power windows, power locks, dual power mirrors, power antenna, cruise control, rear-window defroster, security system, alloy wheels, and stereo cassette radio. Major option in our car: Touring Package (includes leather upholstery, upgraded stereo cassette, CD player, power sunroof, fog lights, special paint, and rear wiper/washer). List price, as equipped, $34,720, including destination charge. **Other styles.** None.

SUBARU SVX

Tested car. Two-door LS sedan, $26,250 list. Standard equipment includes 3.3-liter DOHC 24-valve Flat 6, all-wheel drive, overdrive automatic transmission, driver's air bag, automatic air-conditioning, antilock brakes, limited slip differential, power windows, power locks, dual power mirrors, power antenna, cruise control, tilt/telescoping steering column, rear-window defroster/wiper/washer, fog lights, alloy wheels, remote locking/security system, and stereo cassette sound system. Major options in our car: Touring Package (includes leather upholstery, power driver's seat, power sunroof, electronic power steering, premium sound system, CD player, and dual heated mirrors), and rear spoiler. List price, as equipped, $30,204, including dealer preparation and destination charges. **Other styles.** None.

	Nissan	Chevrolet	Mazda	Subaru
Dimensions [1]				
Wheelbase, in.	97	96	96	103
Overall length, in.	170	179	169	182
Width, in.	71	71	69	70
Max. rated load, lb.	390	399	366	685
Road clearance, in.	4.0	4.5	3.8	4.5
Front shoulder room, in.	57.0	53.5	52.0	56.0
Max. front leg room, in.	42.0	42.5	42.0	43.0
Front head room, in.	3.0	3.5	1.0	2.5
Rear shoulder room, in.	—	—	—	54.5
Rear fore-and-aft seating room, in.	—	—	—	25.0
Rear head room, in.	—	—	—	0.0
Door top to ground, in.	44.5	44.0	43.0	46.5
Luggage capacity	3+2	1+1	1+0	4+1
Turning circle, ft.	39	43	37	39
Steering factor	0.59(P)	0.65(P)	0.68(P)	0.76(P)
Weight and tires				
Curb weight, lb. [2]	3565	3380	2895	3610
Percent weight, front/rear	55/45	52/48	49/51	59/41
Front tire size	225/50 R16	275/40 R17	225/50 R16	225/50 R16
Rear tire size	245/45 R16	275/40 R17	225/50 R16	225/50 R16
Engine and gearing				
Displacement (liters)/ configuration	3.0/V6	5.7/V8	1.3/2	3.3/6
Net horsepower	300	300	255	230
Transmission/speeds	Man/5	Man/6	Man/5	Auto/4
Overall ratio, high gear	2.77	1.73	2.95	2.46
Engine revs. per mile [3]	2385	1380	2540	2120
Acceleration [4]				
0-30 mph, sec.	2.5	2.3	2.6	3.3
0-60 mph, sec.	6.1	5.5	6.0	8.8
0-end of ¼ mi., sec.	14.6	14.1	14.5	16.7
Mph, end of ¼ mi.	98	103	100	85
Passing: 45-65 mph, sec.	3.9	3.4	3.9	5.7
Fuel economy [5]				
EPA estimates, city/highway, mpg.	18/24	17/25	17/25	17/25
CU's 150-mile trip, mpg.	24	20	21	23
City driving, mpg.	15	11	12	13
Expressway driving, mpg.	31	32	29	32
Fuel refill capacity, gal.	19.0	20.0	20.1	18.5
Cruising range, mi.	435	360	400	390
Fuel used in 15,000 mi., gal.	700	880	810	775
Braking from 60 mph [6]				
No wheels locked, ft.	135	126	119	134
Pedal effort, initial ½-G stop, lb.	20	25	20	30
Pedal effort, 10th successive stop, lb.	25	25	20	35

[1] Dimensions are in inches, except as noted. External dimensions are as furnished by manufacturer; others are as measured by CU. Road clearance is distance from level road surface to lowest part of car likely to strike road. Head room is measured between car's headliner and head of a 5-foot-9-inch CU tester. Luggage capacity is for two-suiters + weekend cases. Steering factor is number of turns of steering wheel needed for turn of 30-foot radius. P= power steering.

[2] Curb weight, to nearest five pounds, includes fuel, oil, and coolant.

[3] "Engine revolutions per mile" is same as engine speed at 60 mph. Other factors being equal, a higher number means better acceleration; a lower number, better fuel economy.

[4] Acceleration runs, except for passing test, are from standstill with engine idling at start. All runs are with gears shifted to best advantage.

[5] Except for EPA estimates, all mpg figures are as measured by CU and are rounded to nearest mpg. Cruising range is computed by multiplying fuel mileage on 150-mile trip by fuel-refill capacity, rounding to nearest five miles, and subtracting 30. Fuel used for 15,000 miles is calculated from equal portions of city driving, expressway driving, and the 150-mile trip, and is rounded to nearest five gallons.

[6] Minimum-distance controlled stops are to the nearest foot within a 12-foot lane. Distance applies only to CU test conditions, but relative ranking should remain consistent under most conditions. Fade test includes 10 moderate stops at ⅓-mile intervals. Difference in pedal effort between first and 10th stops indicates amount of fade; maximum acceptable effort, 150 pounds.